

Sam Carlson, *The Packer*

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (from left), Sen. Al Franken, Councilman Melvin Carter III and Franken's field director Katherine Blauvelt visit St. Paul, Minn.-based J&J Distributing to recognize the company's efforts to conserve energy and create jobs.

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Rep. Betty McCollum, D.-Minn., joined the senators to see how the company is using \$3.3 million in federal stimulus and state and local funds, according to a news release.

Phase one of the three-phase, \$8.5 million project includes installation of energy-efficient lighting and three energy climate systems to replace 44 refrigeration units. The purchase of the equipment was made possible by a \$1.3 million loan authorized by the Saint Paul Port Authority through its Trillion BTU Fund, which companies can use to finance energy-efficiency projects and then repay the financing with the energy savings.

The city of St. Paul contributed \$1.5 million for a 20,000-square-foot expansion that will include a cutting room and create about 150 jobs, according to the release.

The company also plans to use funds from the St. Paul Community Development Block Grant Recovery Act to build an on-site greenhouse that will produce 220,000 pounds of tomatoes and other produce annually.

The 20,000-square-foot expansion should begin in October, according to the release. The energy upgrades are in the engineering stage and are scheduled to be finished in the spring of 2011, with construction of the greenhouse to follow in the summer of 2011.

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